

**GRANTEE:**

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

**PROGRAM TITLE:**

*The Choctaw Nation Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early  
Childhood Home Visiting Program—  
Project Chahta Vlla Apela*

**PROGRAM PERIOD:**

Cohort 3 (September 30, 2012 to September 29, 2017)

**KEY GRANTEE PROGRAM STAFF**

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**GOAL OF THE PROGRAM**

The goal of Project Chahta Vlla Apela is to support the development of healthy, happy, successful Choctaw/Native American children and families through a coordinated, high-quality, evidence-based home visiting strategy that will assist in expanding the evidence base for home visiting programs for Native populations.

**COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR THE PROGRAM**

<b>State:</b>	Oklahoma
<b>Rural or Urban/Reservation or Non-Reservation:</b>	Rural Non-Reservation/ Oklahoma Tribal Jurisdiction Area (TJA)
<b>Description of Service Area:</b>	The Choctaw Nation tribal service area spans more than 11,784 square miles of rugged hills and valleys, an area larger than Delaware, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia combined. The Choctaw Nation is bordered by Arkansas to the east and Texas to the south. Project Chahta Vlla Apela serves six of the 10 1/2 counties, which includes: Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Hughes, Johnston, Le Flore, Pittsburg, and Pontotoc. The service area is the northern and western counties of the Choctaw Nation. Three of the largest communities in the Nation—Durant (Choctaw Nation Headquarters), McAlester, and Atoka—are located in these counties. The geography is hilly, with several large lakes, including Lake Texoma and Eufaula Lake.
<b>Births Per Year:</b>	There are 3,256 births per year within the Choctaw Nation.
<b>Children Ages Birth to 5 Years in Target Community:</b>	16,635 children, ages birth to 5 years, live within the 10 1/2 county service area of the Choctaw Nation.

## COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR THE PROGRAM (continued)

<b>Unique Characteristics of Target Community:</b>	<p>Oklahoma has the largest population of American Indians. The Choctaw Nation serves the second largest tribal area in the lower 48 states. However, the Choctaw Nation serves over twice as many American Indians.</p> <p>The Choctaw Nation is an integrated tribe, meaning it is not reservation-based. The Choctaw Nation offers many services in its communities. However due to the large geographic area, tribal members may need to drive several hours to utilize these services. The overall economy of the Choctaw Nation TJA leaves many of the families facing challenges finding jobs due to a lack of education and the scarcity of employers.</p>
<b>Key Community Partners:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choctaw Nation (CN) Head Start</li> <li>• Project Empower</li> <li>• CN Education Department</li> <li>• CN Youth Outreach Services</li> <li>• Elderly Advocacy</li> <li>• CHIPRA</li> <li>• SPPT</li> <li>• CN Project Youth</li> <li>• CN Family Services</li> <li>• CN Health Service Authority</li> <li>• CN Tribal Research Department</li> <li>• Oklahoma State Health Department</li> <li>• CN Hokli Nittak</li> <li>• Vocational Rehabilitation Program</li> <li>• CN Child Care Assistance</li> <li>• CN Behavioral Health</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Services</li> <li>• Community Health Representatives</li> <li>• McCurtain Memorial Hospital</li> <li>• CN Career Development</li> <li>• Community Based Social Work</li> <li>• Faith Based Counseling</li> <li>• Indian Child Welfare</li> <li>• CN Adult Education</li> <li>• CN Women, Infants, and Children</li> <li>• McAlester Regional Health Center</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Risk Factors in Target Community:</b>	<p>The primary risk factors of the target community include very limited economic opportunities, poverty, unemployment and underemployment, poor adult literacy, high rates of low birth weight and premature birth, high percentage of school dropouts, high rates of teen pregnancy, alcohol or substance abuse, delinquency, child maltreatment, and domestic violence.</p>

## PROGRAM DELIVERY CONTEXT

<b>Organization Type Administering the Program:</b>	The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized tribe.
<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
<b>Target Population:</b>	The target population of Project Chahta Vlla Apela includes American Indian families with children birth through 12 months of age. These children are from high-risk families who delivered their infant through or received pediatric health care from the Choctaw Nation Health Care (CNHC) system. These children also participated in at least 12 (or 50 percent) of the available home visiting program activities between birth and 12 months of age.
<b>Target and Actual Numbers Served:</b>	The target number of families to be served is 34. The program is currently serving 33 families.

## HOME VISITING MODEL SELECTED

Project Chahta Vlla Apela selected the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model.

## KEY MODEL ADAPTATIONS OR ENHANCEMENTS

Project Chahta Vlla Apela will utilize the PAT curriculum as its cornerstone. In addition, the Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) program was selected to provide a strong cultural supplement that will be offered to all clients during the PAT-mandated monthly Group Connections.

Project Chahta Vlla Apela will implement the PIP curriculum to provide the cultural components to speak to the traditions of the Native families. This will be presented primarily in Group Connections meetings in which PIP will discuss strengths of traditional American Indian parenting ways.

## DESCRIPTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

The Choctaw Nation has many existing early childhood programs that are culturally sensitive and dedicated to offering support and resources to American Indian families and their children. These programs are backed by the community as well as the Tribal Council.

The Choctaw Nation Head Start program is directed primarily toward economically disadvantaged families with children 3 to 5 years of age. Head Start uses 5 major component areas to serve the needs of the children enrolled as well as their families: (1) education/literacy, (2) health, (3) parent involvement, (4) family services, and (5) nutrition. The Choctaw Nation Head Start program helps children prepare for their formal years of schooling. Child Development Centers are located in Bennington, Stigler, Idabel, Durant, and Coalgate. These centers house a Head Start program and childcare.

The Choctaw Nation Childcare Assistance program helps increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services. The Nation permits parents to choose from a broad range of child care providers and assists with child care costs. Additional early childhood programs include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children and the Children and Family Services.

The Choctaw Nation has partnered with the Administration for Children and Families as one of four tribes to participate in the Tribal Early Learning Initiative, a new initiative to improve the coordination of early learning and development programs. The Choctaw Nation will concentrate efforts with these supplemental funds to improve collaboration across Head Start, Child Care Assistance, and Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation programs.



## EVALUATION APPROACH

### Evaluation Question

Does Project Chahta Vlla Apela positively impact early childhood development/wellness outcomes for Native American children from high-risk families as compared to the outcomes from similar high needs families who did not participate in the Project Chahta Vlla Apela?

### Evaluation Design

Project Chahta Vlla Apela will use a quasi-experimental comparison group design. The comparison group will be recruited from a tribal prenatal and postnatal clinic and from other locations within the community. The evaluation will ensure baseline equivalence of the treatment and comparison group in the following areas: income, index child is the oldest child in the family, a history of child abuse or neglect or have interactions with child welfare services, and users of tobacco products in the home.

## KEY FEDERAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) STAFF:

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